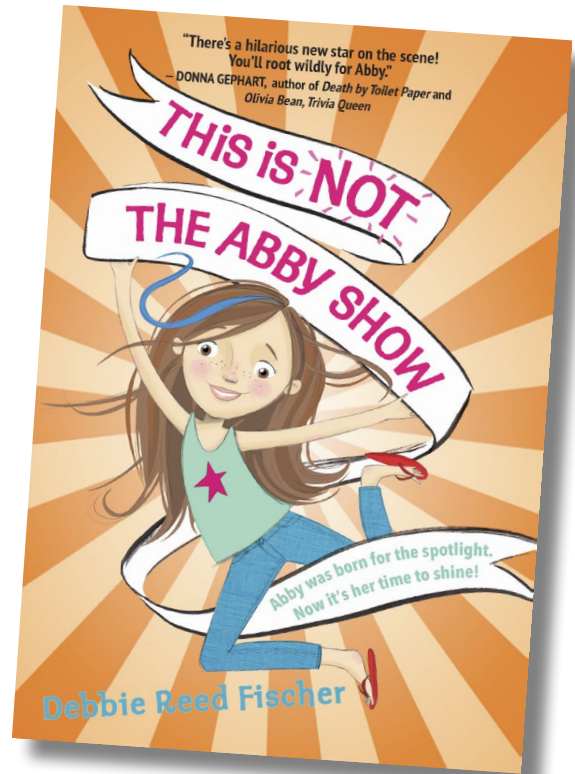


A Common Core State
Standards Aligned Discussion
& Activity Guide
for Grades 4-7

THIS IS NOT THE ABBY SHOW

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Written by Debbie Reed Fischer
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Young Readers

Abby was born for the spotlight. Now it's her time to shine!

Abby is twice exceptional—she is gifted in math and science, and she has ADHD. Normally, she has everything pretty much under control. But when Abby makes one HUGE mistake that leads to “The Night That Ruined My Life,” or “TNTRML,” she lands in summer school.

Abby thinks the other summer-school kids are going to be total weirdos. And what with her parents’ new rules, plus all the fuss over her brother’s bar mitzvah, her life is turning into a complete disaster. But as Abby learns to communicate better and finds friends who love her for who she is, she discovers that her biggest weaknesses could be her greatest assets.

Guide created by Debbie Gonzales
www.debbiegonzales.com



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Discussion Questions

NOTE: Turn to the cited reference in the book when discussing the following statements. Consider all correlating plot points when examining the quotations and comments below.

How can I explain that it started when I fell behind in three or four assignments because, even though I did them, I couldn't find them, then I felt lost in class, so cracking jokes was the only way to get through (pg. 35).

- 'Anxiety' is defined as a feeling of worry, dread, and tension. Determine if Abby is feeling anxiety in this scene.
- One of the symptoms of ADHD is 'inattention', meaning that a person is highly disorganized, unable to focus, and are often forgetful when it comes to daily activities. Identify ways that Abby displays inattentiveness in this and other scenes in the story.
- ADHD is a chronic condition. The term 'chronic' means never-ending, enduring, and incurable. Consider how Abby's chronic ADHD effects everything she does.
- The term 'condition' is defined as an illness, a disease, or a weakness. Do you agree that ADHD can be considered to be a 'condition'? Why or why not?
- Discuss how having a condition such as ADHD might effect a person's confidence and sense of well-being.
- Connect Abby's need for cracking jokes as the only way to get through school and her ADHD. Discover a link between the two.

This is the worst thing I've ever done. I went too far, and there is no way out (pg. 45).

- Another symptom of ADHD is 'impulsivity,' which means to act without thinking, careless, and be abrupt. Examine Abby's impulsive behavior on The Night That Ruined My Life.
- An expression of ADHD impulsive behavior is being self-focused. Determine how her decision to get even with Mr. Finsecker was a self-focused act.
- Examine Caitlin's role in the events that took place on Mr. Finsecker's street. Explain why Abby was forced to assume the bulk of the blame for their vandalism.

"No." Mom fidgets with her purse strap. "I've been pretty hands-off. Abby's grades were excellent in her other classes, so I never guessed there was a problem in English" (pg. 70).

- Interpret Abby's response to her mother's admission that she has been 'hands off' with regard to her daughter's academic progress. Does Mom adopt the same policy with Abby's siblings, Drew and Mike?
- Explain how Abby has the ability to excel in math and science and yet struggles in English. Predict whether her challenges lie more with the topic or the teacher. Explain your answer.
- In reference to Dr. C's comment about Abby being an exceptional actress, Mom affirms Abby's talent instead of saying that she's proud of her daughter. Tell why she reacted to Dr. C's statement in this way.
- Discuss how family dynamics contribute to Abby's need to be noticed.



“Wow, you have hairy legs!” I blurt out. “It’s like you’re wearing furry khaki pants.” His head snaps back. Trina and Amy laugh, then stop when they see his stung expression. “Sorry, was that mean?” I ask (84-85).

- Determine how Abby acted in an impulsive manner in the scene above.
- Oftentimes, the impulsivity of ADHD leads to experiencing social problems. Explain how impulsivity contributes to Abby’s troublesome issues with family, friends, and school.
- Observe Trina’s and Amy’s reactions to Abby’s comment. Identify the reason, or social clue, that caused them to stop laughing. Explain why Abby lacks social clues such as those demonstrated by Trina and Amy.

Because I caused it. Why do I say these things? WHY (pg. 121)?

- Answer Abby’s question. Why does she say hurtful things to nice people like Max?
- Considering another person’s ‘perspective’ means to anticipate how they might feel, see, or think about situations. Discuss why considering another person’s perspective is difficult for Abby.
- Even though Abby insulted Max, once again, in this scene, identify clues revealing that she is becoming more aware of the consequences of her actions.

“It’s not at a Home Depot opening, its at Millennium Lakes.” Then he goes, “You know what, Abby Green? You are a snob” (pg. 173).

- A ‘snob’ is someone who looks down on others, who thinks they are better than those around them. Do you agree with Max? Is Abby a snob? Explain your answer.
- Determine what role having ADHD contributes to Abby’s snob-like behavior.
- Max’s accusation was blunt. Evaluate whether his statement was a ‘reaction’ or ‘response’ to Abby’s resistance to help Max with his magic show.
- Are there times when being blunt is benefical? Explain your answer.

Max and I put those smiles on their faces. We brought a room to life, entertained them (pg. 190).

- To ‘entertain’ means to amuse, cheer, and charm others. Explain why Abby finds pleasure in the fact that she and Max were able to entertain the Millenium Lakes residents.
- Consider how entertaining others can be an act of generosity and caring.
- Identify ways that Abby’s character is changing and how the experiences at Millenium Lakes are helping to bring about that change.



“It’s nice when you’re like this,” he says. “You don’t have to act funny every minute, entertaining everyone around you. You can just be you, you know.”

That’s what a real friend is, I realize. Someone who likes you for just being you (pg. 228).

- Explain why the awareness of what it means to have a true friend is a new experience for Abby.
- Earlier, Abby identified Caitlin as being her friend. Determine how her new-found friendships with Trina, Amy, and Max differ from her relationship with Caitlin.
- Discuss how the old saying ‘To have a friend is to be a friend’ pertains to Abby’s growing understanding of real friendship. Identify ways that her change in nature contributes to the development of true friendship.
- Consider ways that Abby is learning to be a friend to herself, as well as others. Explore the connection between the two ideas.

“I don’t care if you steal my spotlight,” [Drew] says. “I don’t like being in it anyway” (pg. 254.)

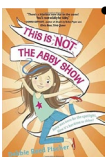
- Discuss how Abby’s ADHD affects her brother’s life.
- Explore how Drew became brave enough to become true to himself by stating his opinions regarding sports participation and presenting his film.
- The bar mitzvah ceremony celebrates the end of boyhood and entrance into manhood. Determine how Drew’s actions demonstrate his inner confidence and maturity - his entrance into manhood.

Tonight, I have proof that my mouth, the thing that always got me in trouble, the thing that I thought was my enemy, might just be the best thing I have going for me. I can hold on to my dreams. Your biggest flaw can be your greatest asset (pg. 282).

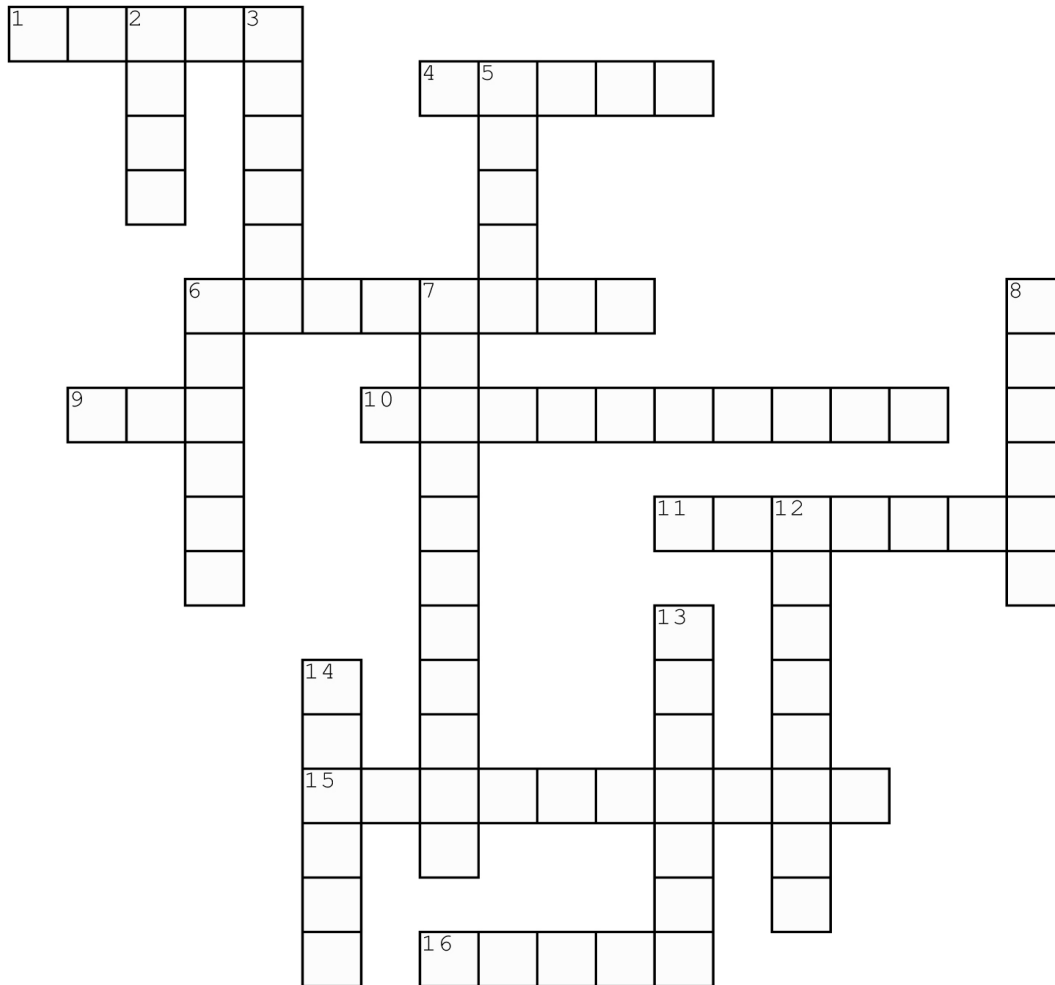
- Notice that, in the quote above, Abby refers to her ‘mouth’ getting her in trouble in the past tense. Consider the significance of her thinking of her impulsivity in this way.
- Explore how the symptoms of ADHD - inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity - were once her ‘enemy’ that was transformed into being her strength.
- Analyze Trina’s, Amy’s, and Max’s flaws. Tell how their flaws became strengths.
- Caitlin lacks the willingness, or the awareness, to be honest with herself regarding her strengths and weaknesses. Consider what the ability to be accountable for your actions has to do with the discovery of one’s ‘greatest asset.’

**I guess Mike means well. He just doesn’t know how to show it.
I know what that feels like (pg. 286).**

- Consider how Abby has developed the ability to consider a situation from another person’s perspective, in this case Mike’s perspective.
- The word ‘empathy’ means understanding, sympathy, and compassion. Describe how Abby is demonstrating empathy for her older brother in this scene.
- Explore how Abby is demonstrating empathy towards herself.
- Summarize the overall theme of THIS IS NOT THE ABBY SHOW in one word. Tell what this story is about. Explain your answer.



Crossword Puzzle



Across:

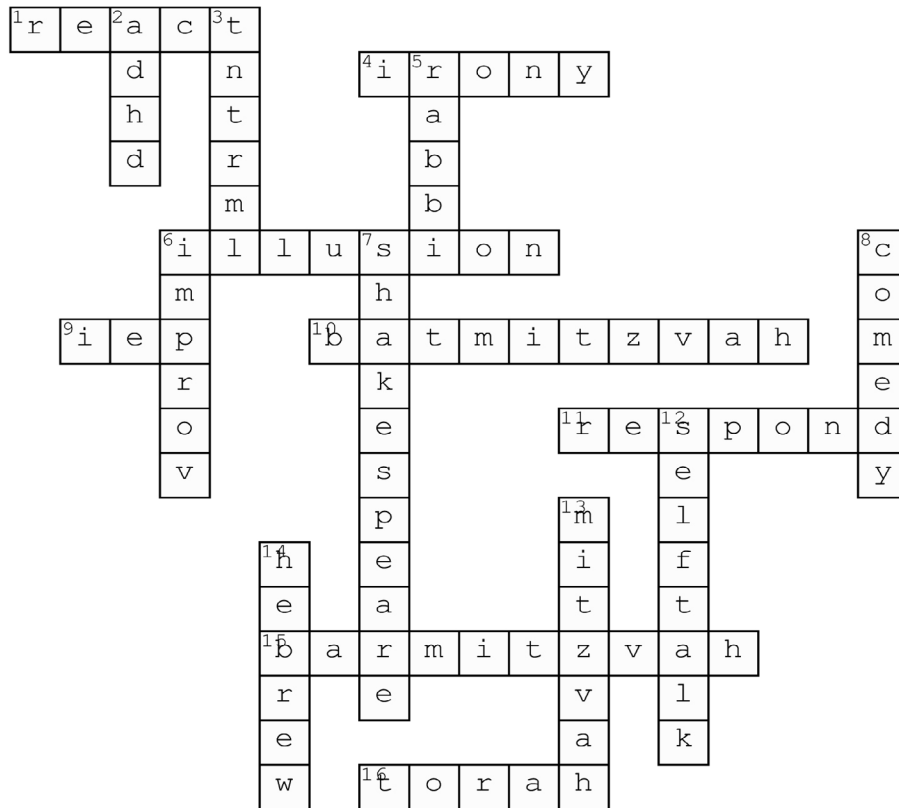
1. Respond with hostility
4. The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite,
6. A thing that is or is likely to be wrongly perceived or interpreted by the senses, a magic trick
9. The Individualized Educational Plan
10. A religious initiation ceremony for a Jewish girl aged twelve years
11. Say something in reply
15. The religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13
16. (in Judaism) the law of God as revealed to Moses and recorded in the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures

Down:

2. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
3. The Night That Ruined My Life
5. A person appointed as a Jewish religious leader
6. A form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment
7. Wrote A Midsummer Night's Dream
8. Professional entertainment consisting of jokes and satirical sketches, intended to make an audience laugh.
12. The act or practice of talking to oneself, either aloud or silently and mentally
13. A good deed
14. Language through which Jewish scriptures and traditions form the basis of the Jewish religion.



Crossword Puzzle Answers



Across:

1. Respond with hostility
4. The expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite,
6. A thing that is or is likely to be wrongly perceived or interpreted by the senses, a magic trick
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React or Respond?

She talks about how I need to stop and think about what I am feeling when my anger takes over, and compares it to hitting pause on a remote control, or slamming on the brakes on my bike. Then we discuss managing my emotions, how I need to respond and not react (pg. 74).

Objective: To analyze how changed responses to challenges demonstrates the development of that a character's emotional arc.

Materials:

- THIS IS NOT THE ABBY SHOW
- The React or Respond Graphic Organizer (Guide, pg. 9)
- Pencil

Procedure:

- Print and distribute **The React or Respond Graphic Organizer** to the students.
- Discuss the difference between 'reacting' and 'responding'. Encourage students to discover the similarities and differences between the two methods of emotional expression.
- Refer to **The React or Respond Graphic Organizer**. Instruct them to find the cited quote in the text. Consider the action occurring in the scene in which the quote is found.
- Read the quote. Evaluate Abby's emotional behavior in each particular scene. Decide whether she is reacting to the situation, responding to it - or a little bit of both!
- Instruct students to check the box that they think best describes Abby's behavior in the that scene and to explain their reasoning in the box provided on the left.
- Determine how Abby's character changed as a result of her efforts to control her emotions.
- Discuss situations in which a response can be interpreted as a reaction, or when a reaction can be perceived as a response.
- Are there times when a reaction is the appropriate response to a situation? How so?
- Identify the social skills required for a person to understand which behavior is best to engage in at any given moment. How can a person know what to do, whether to react or respond?

React or Respond Graphic Organizer Sample

I throw my hands up as if my team just scored. "Yes! I'll never have to see his face again!" Tony's expression tells me my outburst is inappropriate (pg. 54)

↑
Find quote in text.
Review the scene.

React

Respond

↑
Evaluate Abby's
emotional
response here.

Explain your answer in the boxes below.

↑
Validate your answer here. Show how Abby's
emotional responses reveal clues about her
changing awareness as a character.



React or Respond Graphic Organizer

Explain your answer in the boxes below.

I throw my hands up as if my team just scored. “Yes! I’ll never have to see his face again!” Tony’s expression tells me my outburst is inappropriate (pg. 54)

React

Respond

“Just out of curiosity, is the Dalai Lama actual llama? Or a dolly?” I ask. “I mean, what is a llama? I’ve never been clear on that” (pg. 89).

React

Respond

“This is not Dad’s fault! I call after her. “It’s mine!” I look at Dad. “Are you going to make me pay for the window” (pg. 149)?

React

Respond

“Right now she is, but sometimes, she’s a real-” I stop talking, suddenly remembering about Max’s mom. They’re all looking at me, waiting for my answer. “Thanks. She is nice.” Conversational accident avoided (pg. 207).

React

Respond

Suddenly, anger courses through my veins like a flash flood. “WHY?” I yell, throwing a cluster of grapes at Max. He puts his hands out. I pelt him, one grape at a time. “Why? Why? Why? You don’t have to. You want to, even after she -” (pg. 222).

React

Respond

“We’re not as close as we used to be because of the way you’ve treated me, not because of my new friends,” I say. “Didn’t you make new friends at camp” (pg. 271)?

React

Respond



The Spotlight Is On YOU!

That's not the worst part. There's the fear. The sweat on my brow. My hammering heart. And the possibility that I'll never be as good as the kids who went before me (pg. 276).

Objective: Determine how a character in a story responds to a challenge by summarizing and analyzing the text.

Materials:

- THIS IS NOT THE ABBY SHOW
- The Spotlight Graphic Organizer (Guide, pg. 11)
- Writing materials - paper, pencil, or computer

Procedure 1:

- Inform the students that, in this lesson, they will learn what it takes to write like a comedian.
- Print a copy of **The Spotlight Graphic Organizer** for each student. Review the Tips for Comedians listed in the column on the right.
- Instruct students to turn to Chapter 45 (pgs. 276-281) in **THIS IS NOT THE ABBY SHOW**. Read the chapter aloud to the class. Students are to follow along silently.
- Referencing the Tips for Comedians list featured on **The Spotlight Graphic Organizer**, instruct students to identify phrases or behaviors demonstrated in Abby's stand up act. Find phrases that match with the topics on the Tips for Comedians list.
- Cite places in the text verifying your selections in the space provided.
- Discuss students' work together as a class

Procedure 2:

- Instruct students to write a comedy script based on some aspect in their life.
- Some things to consider when writing a comedic piece are:
 - ~ Decide upon the comedy genre to focus upon.
 - * Awkward
 - * Sarcastic
 - * Clever/Quick witted
 - * Friendly
 - * Goofy
 - ~ Pick a point of view.
 - * Will the student be telling a story about something that happened to them?
 - * Will the story be told in present tense or past tense?
 - ~ Encourage students to create a comedic piece around a personal experience, one in which they can develop a conflict of some sort.
 - ~ Encourage students avoid judging their work during the initial, free-writing stage. Tell them not to worry if the jokes are funny. Just get something written and build upon that later.
- Referencing tips listed on **The Spotlight Graphic Organizer** may be helpful in crafting their pieces.
- Share written pieces with the class. Host an improv! Have FUN!



The Spotlight Graphic Organizer

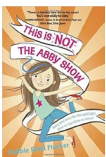
TIPS FOR COMEDIANS	CITATIONS FROM THE TEXT (note page number & specific quote)
MAKE FUN OF YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR LIFE (pg. 274)	
WRITE ABOUT A THING YOU KNOW WELL	
WRITE ABOUT A BORING THING	
MAKE THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY	
BE FEARLESS (pg. 274)	
BE HONEST (pg. 274)	
OUTRAGEOUS COMEDY COMES OUT OF RAGE (pg. 275)	
SAVE THE BIGGEST LAUGH UNTIL THE END	



Common Core State Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards - Reading: Literature

		Discussion Questions	Crossword Puzzle	React/Respond	Spotlight
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Hercules).		●		
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.		●		
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.		●		
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3	Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone		●		
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.	●	●	●	●



English Language Arts Standards - Writing

		Discussion Questions	Crossword Puzzle	React/Respond	Spotlight
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8	Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.8	Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.				●

English Language Arts Standards - Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 4 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 5 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.2	Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.5.4	Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.	●		●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.				●